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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000123

SIPDIS

NOFORN

AF/EX FOR D. YAMAMOTO

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI: GOVERNMENT ANXIOUS OVER ELEVATED PROFILE

REF: DJIBOUTI 110

Classified By: POLOFF C. BEAMER FOR REASONS 1.5 (A,B,C,D)

#### SUMMARY

1. (S/NF) Amidst growing Djiboutian Government stir related to recent explosions (Ref. A) and claims by Puntland strongman Abdullahi Yusuf of Djibouti arming Somaliland against him in the Sool region, Post SAO Major Patrick Anderson received a browbeating on January 27 from Abdourahman Boreh, perhaps the individual closest to Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh. Boreh expressed a growing frustration from the Djiboutian side. Boreh believes that despite their continued and ongoing support of the U.S. on several counter terrorism fronts Djibouti has not gained the concrete means to properly protect its own interests. He made specific mention of the 25 million dollars in FMF security assistance that Djibouti has yet to see complaining that in the meantime, "If we take one hit at the Port we are finished." Boreh was accompanied by Colonel Abdou, head of the President's Republican Guard, and Mohamed Ali Hassan, designated American military handler at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting reinforces Post's perception that the Djiboutians feel recent events have elevated their profile vis a vis transnational terrorism to unprecedented levels, while making evident their inability to react effectively.

#### THE MESSAGE

2. (S/NF) The fundamental complaint is not a new one for those familiar with the recent history of an increased U.S. footprint in Djibouti. High expectations have been created by the increased DOD and other U.S. Agency presence here and Djibouti's business elite want to see the goods delivered. They are particularly anxious about the security of their port and airport, the pillars upon which the service economy is built. Team after team of evaluators from numerous U.S. agencies have passed through both facilities and still the Djiboutians do not have the naval capacity to protect their current port let alone provide the investor assuaging coverage of their oil terminal project in Dorale that they desperately want. Boreh cited the recent attack on the train (see reftel) and increased terrorist actions in Somaliland as evidence that the terrorist threat in Djibouti has risen significantly in recent weeks. Boreh said "We (US and DJI) have those things going on in Somaliland...there are people there who could do bad things to Djibouti...we (DJI) know the Ethiopians are doing something with the train...we (DJI) are going to do some raids and kick the shit out of some people to send a message...we (DJI) know that Djibouti is the port and airport and if anything happens to them we are finished...we (DJI) need the security now, especially with the new project in Dorale to make sure that the Americans are safe." He went on to state that the USG must produce some tangible assistance in order to reassure the military leadership that they (the USG) are serious about improving Djibouti's security. The Djiboutians fear that a terrorist attack at this critical juncture in both their economic development and the development of what they hope will be a long term U.S. presence would be the end of their grand strategy. Major Anderson reminded those present that Djibouti is not alone in their frustration and that the US remains committed to helping Djibouti with their security needs. He noted that the same system used to assist Djibouti is assisting Afghanistan and Iraq but that it takes time.

#### THE MESSENGER

3. (S/NF) Abdourahman Boreh is the financial face of Ismail Omar Guelleh. He was a relatively minor player in local Djiboutian commerce until he rode Guelleh's coattails up the power ladder to his current seat as his richest and most influential economic advisor. There are three villas constructed on Djibouti's exclusive Haramous peninsula, the first belongs to President Guelleh, the second to Boreh, and the third to ex-President Gouled. Boreh orchestrated the 2001 Arta conference which gave birth to the Transitional

National Government in Mogadishu. Boreh's economic base starts as the local representative of British-American Tobacco. When shipments of his cigarettes were seized on the Somaliland frontier in 2000 it was enough to have the frontier closed and chill Djiboutian-Somaliland relations until reparations were paid almost two years later. Boreh had a category 1 visa hit (later overcome by Security Advisory Opinion) which Post believes stems from an Interpol investigation into the illegal exportation of Ethiopian coffee. He is not widely popular and an opposition contact said "Boreh would sell you his mother if it meant he could make a dime." He has close ties to Dubai and the UAE, including Dubai Ports International. He owns the largest construction company in Djibouti, Supreme, and has profited handsomely from construction contracts at Camp Lemonier, home to U.S. forces in Djibouti.

COMMENT

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14. (S/NF) Boreh and Guelleh have big plans for the oil port terminal in Dorale. These plans hinge upon a U.S. Naval contract with Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC) and a continued good reputation for security and stability at their current port. Increased collaboration with the U.S. on many fronts has elevated their threat profile and in light of recent explosions on the train and activities in Somaliland, they are getting nervous. Boreh wants to see the oft-promised security assistance and he wants to see it yesterday. Djibouti is less a country than a commercial city state controlled by one man, Ismail Omar Guelleh. He sent his money man, who usually does not attend these meetings, to deliver a message. The Djiboutian Government believes (or wants us to believe) they are at greater risk to terrorist attack than ever before. They hope this message will expedite delivery.

15. (S/NF) Post would like to expedite security assistance as well and has spoken about this with CJTF-HOA and will raise the issue with DSCA's Europe, Russia, Americas, and Sub-Saharan Africa Director, Ms. Jeanne Farmer, later this week. However, we still believe the train incidents do not impact the U.S. interest in the Horn and best guesses are they relate to larger Djiboutian-Ethiopian frictions. End comment.

SMITH